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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001835

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SUBJECT: UAE LEADERS RECEIVE IRAN'S ALI LARIJANI

ABU DHABI 00001835 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission, Martin R. Quinn, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Vice President/Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum separately received Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani May 13. According to local press reports, President Khalifa urged Larijani "to support development efforts that would ensure prosperity for the peoples of the region," and expressed the UAE's commitment to stability, security, and peace in the Gulf and Middle East region. "The course of events in the region shows that there is a dire need for as much coordination and cooperation as possible to make this part of the world an oasis of security and stability," Khalifa told Larijani. Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed mentioned that the Iranian official was coming when he met April 30 with Treasury Under Secretary Stuart Levey and Ambassador, observing that it could become embarrassing for the GCC to have to tell visitors like Larijani that they are "not welcome."

¶2. (U) For his part, Larijani reportedly briefed Khalifa on Iran's stance on its nuclear program and its standoff with the U.S. Larijani assured GCC states that its nuclear program poses no threat to them and that under no circumstance will Iran attack them. He dismissed the GCC's security concerns as "baseless." Larijani also said he welcomed "any effort by the GCC in addressing the crisis over our nuclear program to help defuse international pressure on Iran and spare the region more troubles." Larijani added, "Has Iran ever attacked any neighborly country, to do this now?" Larijani asked. He asserted that it is instead Americans who have "proved that they are aggressors in times of peace and war." The local Arabic and English press played Larijani's visit on their front pages. During his UAE visit, Larijani also paid a symbolic visit to the mausoleum of the late UAE President Zayed.

¶3. (U) Speaking at a press conference, Larijani said Iran was prepared to go for dialogue on the nuclear dossier, "provided that our rights are not undermined." He said he was confident that the GCC leaders would not side with the U.S. in its confrontation with Iran "because they were aware of the U.S. Administration's double standards policies." Larijani further accused the U.S. of courting dissent in the region, according to the official UAE news agency, WAM. "The U.S. is now planting seeds of discord between Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Iraq and elsewhere in the region," he said. On the Iranian nuclear dossier, Larijani said he believed the GCC leaders were all in favor of a peaceful solution. This

approach, he noted, did not fit well with the U.S. Administration's policy "which has a different agenda for the entire region," WAM reported. On the subject of U.S.-Iran relations, Larijani said "dialogue with the U.S. on Iraq is derived by our keenness to back the Iraqi people in their present ordeal," denying that the dialogue came at Iran's initiative. "We have never invited the Americans for dialogue. The initiative came from the new Iraqi leadership." (Note: President Ahmadinejad recently indicated that with the establishment of an Iraqi government, there is no longer any need for talks with the U.S. on Iraq. End Note.)

¶4. (U) On the issue of the disputed islands which Iran occupies, Larijani dismissed the conflict as "a minor one, compared to the two countries' strong historical ties. ... Iran and the UAE have achieved record progress in their economic and business cooperation. This relationship is based on mutual benefit." Referring to UAE and GCC concerns over Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, Larijani denied that the plant posed any threat to the region. "This plant does not emit any harmful radiation," he said, noting that nuclear fuel will be transported to the plant after one year. "The whole row has been fabricated by the U.S." Iran has invested huge funds to guarantee the safety of these facilities, Larijani told the press. "We have never been aggressors. We have achieved this advanced level of progress using our own resources, without seeking any external assistance. We always pursue peaceful means," he said.

¶5. (U) Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Larijani as telling Sheikh Khalifa that over the past three years, Iran provided IAEA with access beyond the Additional Protocol, including over 2000 inspections. He claimed the IAEA supervises Iran's "entire" nuclear activities and that Iran has reported all of its programs to the agency.

ABU DHABI 00001835 002.2 OF 002

UAE-based Think Tanks Focus on Iran

¶6. (U) Meanwhile, the two major independent think tanks in the UAE have been organizing programs directly and indirectly related to Iran. Later this month, the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) will be hosting a lecture by Dr. Sayed Ali al-Mongy of the Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority on Iran's nuclear program. An ECSSR contact told Pol chief that the aim of the program is to give participants a technical understanding of Iran's nuclear program. The Dubai-based Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted May 2-3 the third in a series of meetings that are part of its research project to promote declaring the Gulf region a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ), to be reported by ConGen Dubai septel. (Note: In December 2005, GCC Secretary General Abdul Rahman al-Attiyah endorsed the idea

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of a Gulf WMDFZ. End Note.) In March, GRC published "The Case for a Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Gulf" by Senior Advisor and Research Program Director Dr. Mustafa Alani.
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